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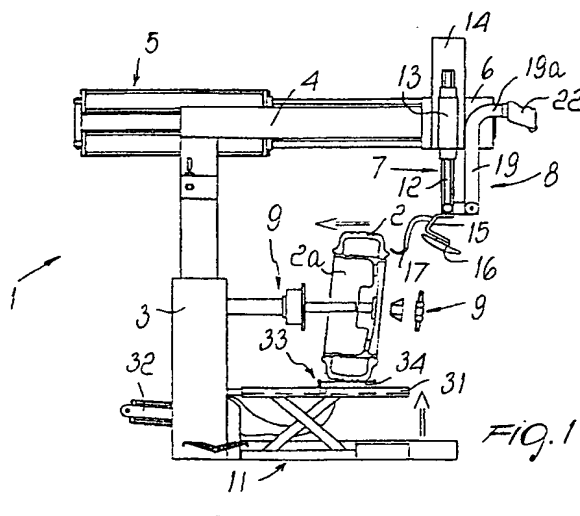
(71) Applicant: **GIULIANO S.r.l.**
42015 Correggio (Reggio Emilia) (IT)

(72) Inventor: **Bonacini, Maurizio**
42015 Correggio, (Prov. Reggio Emilia) (IT)

(74) Representative:
Modiano, Guido, Dr.-Ing. et al
Modiano Gardi Patents,
Via Meravigli, 16
20123 Milano (IT)

(54) Multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires

(57) The multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires is constituted by a turret-type frame (3) from the top vertex of which a horizontal guiding cross-member (4) cantilevers out and by a carriage (6) for supporting first and second devices (7, 8) for mounting and removing tires (2) from their respective wheel rims (2a), which is able to move back and forth on the cross-member (4), under the actuation of a corresponding actuator (5). The frame (3) has, at a substantially median vertical elevation, conventional elements (9) for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels and has, in a downward region, a pusher (10) which co-operates with the first and second mounting and removing devices (7, 8) and a lifting support (11) for lifting the wheels towards the conventional supporting and clamping elements (9) and for seating the mounted tires (2).



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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires.

[0002] Conventional tire changing machines which can mount and remove both conventional and so-called special tires are currently in use.

[0003] The expression "special tires" designates innovative tires which one of the leading manufacturers is currently bringing to market and have the feature of not deflating completely in case of puncture, accordingly allowing to reach the nearest servicing and repair center without substantial difficulties.

[0004] These tires and their wheel rims provide a wheel which is absolutely safe even, as mentioned, in precarious conditions and essentially consist of a wheel rim having different outer and inner edge diameters, the latter being greater than the former; accordingly, the tires have the same feature and can therefore be fitted or removed only in one direction.

[0005] A ring made of elastomeric material of preset thickness is further fitted between the wheel rim and the tire and constitutes the element which, in case of tire deflation, prevents its complete collapse, with severe danger for vehicle users.

[0006] As a consequence of this variety of production by tire manufacturers, tire specialists are forced to purchase two different types of tire changing machine, one for each type of tire, or must improvise with unorthodox means in order to be able to use conventional machines designed for conventional tires, albeit in very precarious conditions and with loss of handiness and speed of use, by applying to these machines adapters which allow to work on special tires as well.

[0007] The prior art is substantially hindered not only by the above-mentioned problem but also by the fact that there is a tendency to constantly reduce the space required for work, with the consequent need to combine, as much as possible, the functions of a plurality of machines which are currently part of the standard equipment of tire specialists into a smaller and more practical number of devices.

[0008] The aim of the present invention is to solve the above-mentioned problems of the prior art by providing a multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires which can, with a single machine, operate on both kinds of tires, thus eliminating the need to purchase two separate machines and significantly reducing the overall costs and space occupation.

[0009] This aim, this object and others are achieved by a multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires, characterized in that it is constituted by a turret-type frame from the top vertex of which a horizontal guiding cross-member cantilevers out, a carriage for supporting first and second means for mounting and removing tires from their respective

wheel rims being able to move back and forth on the cross-member, under the actuation of a corresponding actuator, the frame having, at a substantially median vertical elevation, conventional elements for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels and having, in a downward region, pusher means which co-operate with said first and second mounting and removing means and lifting means for lifting the wheels towards the conventional supporting and clamping means and for seating the mounted tires.

[0010] Further characteristics and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment of a multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires, illustrated only by way of non-limitative example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a schematic front view of the station according to the invention, in a step for positioning a wheel provided with a conventional tire for removal;

Figure 2 is a corresponding top view of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a schematic front view of the station according to the invention, in a step for positioning a wheel provided with a special tire;

Figure 4 is a corresponding top view of Figure 3, with the wheel fully positioned;

Figure 5 is a corresponding side view of the station according to the invention, with the wheel provided with a special tire already fitted;

Figure 6 is a view of a step for breaking away the bead of a sidewall of a tire mounted on a wheel which is clamped onto the station with the aid of levers;

Figure 7 is a view of the step for expelling the tire from the wheel rim;

Figures 8 and 9 are views of the bilateral bead breaking of a tire by using a first mounting and removal means with which the station according to the invention is provided;

Figures 10, 11 and 12 are schematic views of three successive steps of the removal of a tire from the wheel rim by using a first mounting and removal means;

Figures 13, 14 and 15 are views of the same three successive steps for mounting a special tire;

Figure 16 is a view of the insertion of the bead of a conventional tire by using a second mounting and removal means;

Figure 17 is a corresponding side view of Figure 16; Figure 18 is a view of a step of the seating of a tire which has just been mounted on its wheel rim;

Figure 19 is a view of a detail of a component of the pusher means;

Figure 20 is a front view of the station according to the invention, provided with an optional lateral post which supports an auxiliary arm which is provided with a tool for guiding the beads of the tires during

their mounting and removal;

Figure 21 is a corresponding top view of Figure 20;
Figure 22 is a rear view of the station provided with the post as in Figure 20;

Figure 23 is a corresponding side view of Figure 22. 5

[0011] With reference to the above figures, 1 designates a multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires 2.

[0012] The station 1 is constituted by a conventional turret-shaped frame 3, from the upper vertex of which a horizontal guiding cross-member 4 cantilevers out; a carriage 6 can move back and forth on this cross-member, under the actuation of a corresponding actuation means 5, and supports first and second means, designated by 7 and 8 respectively, for mounting and removing the tires 2 on and from the respective wheel rims 2a. 10

[0013] The frame 3 has, at a substantially median vertical elevation, conventional elements 9 for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels and has, in a downward region, pusher means 10 which co-operate with these first and second mounting and removal means 7 and 8; the frame 3 also has, at its base, lifting means 11 adapted to lift the wheels towards the conventional supporting and clamping elements 9 and for seating the tires 2 once they have been mounted. 15

[0014] The first mounting and removal means 7 are constituted by a substantially vertical rod 12 which is mounted so as to slide in a corresponding sleeve 13, which is in turn rigidly coupled to the carriage 6, and is actuated by means of its own fluid-driven actuator 14; it is possible to apply alternately to the lowest end of the rod 12 a pair of tools which can be correspondingly used on conventional or special tires 2: in detail, the tool meant for use on conventional tires 2 is constituted by a shaped support 15 which is articulated so that it can rotate at the lowest end of the rod 12 and on which a freely rotating plate 16 and an opposite-facing extractor claw 17 are fitted; the tool meant for use on special tires 2 is constituted by at least one roller 18 which is mounted so that it can rotate freely at the lowest end of the rod 12, coaxially thereto, for contact with the sidewall/bead region of the tires 2. 20

[0015] The rod 12 and the corresponding sleeve 13 have cross-sections which have a polygonal perimeter, so as to interpenetrate with a single degree of freedom. 25

[0016] The second fitting and removal means 8 are constituted by an arm 19 which is supported on the rod 12 proximate to its lowest end; the arm 19 is articulated so that it can rotate between an upward-facing inactive position and a downward-facing active position, and forms a curved portion 19a which, when it is arranged in said active configuration, is orientated toward said rotating support which constitutes the elements 9. 30

[0017] The arm 19 has, at its tip, a sleeve 20 in which a second rod 21 is slidingly mounted; a shaped element 22 for guiding the beads of the tires 2 during their mounting and removal is in turn rigidly fixed to the 35

lowest end of the second rod.

[0018] The pusher means 10 are constituted by two free rollers 23 which are mounted in a parallel arrangement on corresponding stems 23a, each of which protrudes at right angles from a corresponding sleeve 24 which in turn is slidingly engaged on a horizontal guiding bar 25 which is parallel to the guiding cross-member 4 and also protrudes from the turret-type frame 3, below the elements 9; the sleeves 24 are rotationally connected to each other by means of the guiding bar 25 and there are also means 26 for adjusting their mutual spacing. 40

[0019] The guiding bar 25 has, at its free end, an articulated handle 27 or a fluid-driven actuator in order to produce the simultaneous rotation of the sleeves 24 and of the guiding bar 25 and the horizontal motion of at least one of the sleeves 24, specifically the one lying near it. 45

[0020] The means 26 for adjusting the spacing of the sleeves 24 are constituted by a plate 28 which is rigidly coupled to the handle 27 and protrudes from it so as to lie parallel to the guiding bar 25; the plate is affected by a series of aligned through sectors 29 in which a corresponding pin alternately engages; the pin protrudes from at least one of the sleeves 24, specifically the one lying nearest the handle 27. 50

[0021] The lifting means 11 are constituted by a horizontal platform 31 which is arranged below the elements 9, so as to be vertically aligned with the wheels fitted thereon, and can be moved vertically parallel to itself with a corresponding independent actuation unit 32; a cradle 33 is provided on the upper face of the platform 31 and its position can be slidingly adjusted horizontally on the platform 31; the cradle is used to support and retain the tires 2 and also apply seating pressure to them when their mounting on the wheel rims is completed. 55

[0022] The cradle 33 has, at its ends, respective parallel transverse rollers 34 which are freely supported between the side walls of the cradle in order to provide dynamic contact with the tires 2.

[0023] The turret-type frame 3 can optionally be provided with a lateral post 35 which is joined, at its upper and lower ends, respectively to the corresponding end of the guiding cross-member 4 and to the base of the frame 3; an auxiliary arm 36 is articulated to the post so as to rotate on a horizontal path and has, at its distal end with respect to the post, a tool 37 for guiding the beads of the tires 2 and an element 38 for centering when the tool 37 is in the active configuration. 60

[0024] In practice, the centering element 38 is constituted by a shaped receptacle 39 which is formed at the tip of the distal end of the auxiliary arm 36 and in which a complementarily shaped head 40 can be inserted snugly and coaxially; this head protrudes centrally from the conventional rotating shaft which composes the conventional elements 9 for the rotary support and clamping of the wheels; retention means 65

are provided between the head 40 and the corresponding receptacle 39. These means are substantially constituted by a transverse guillotine 41 which can be inserted, through a corresponding through slot 42 formed in the end of the auxiliary arm 36, in a corresponding aligned groove 43 which is formed perimetrically for this purpose in the head 40.

[0025] The operation of the invention is described hereinafter separately for the mounting and removal of conventional and special tires.

[0026] In both cases, however, the placement of a wheel whose tire 2 is to be replaced is identical: the wheel is in fact placed on the platform 31, which is brought to ground level in advance, and is arranged so as to stand in the cradle 33; this cradle is first made to slide towards the outside of the platform 31, which is raised so as to bring the central hole of the corresponding wheel to a position in which it is axially aligned with the supporting and rotation shaft of which the station 1 is conventionally provided and which constitutes, together with a centering cone and a clamping ring, the means 9.

[0027] Once alignment has been achieved, the cradle 33 is made to slide on the platform 31 towards the turret-type frame 3 and the shaft of the station enters the hole of the wheel, which is then clamped in a conventional manner by means of the corresponding centering cone and ring.

[0028] If the tire is of the conventional type, the station 1 uses the first means 7.

[0029] In practice, first of all the bead of the sidewalls of the tire 2 are broken away (see Figures 8 and 9) by pressing thereon with the plate 16 which presses and is actuated in a transverse direction by the actuation means 5, which in turn acts on the carriage 6, and by turning the wheel with the means 9.

[0030] Bead breaking is performed bilaterally by turning the support 15 which is articulated to the lowest end of the rod 12, and when said bead breaking is complete, i.e. when the tire 2 is pushed towards the central channel of the wheel rim and therefore is arranged loosely thereon, the support 15 is turned and the claw 17 is inserted between the beads and the wheel rim (Figure 11), again turning the wheel with the means 9; this extracts the beads from the wheel rim and therefore allows to manually remove the tire 2 from the wheel rim.

[0031] For mounting (Figures 16 and 17), first of all one bead is fitted loosely on the wheel rim, and when it is fitted in the channel of the wheel rim the shaped element 22 connected to the arm 19 is used; this element is lowered for this purpose and the second bead of the tire 2 is forced, by turning the elements 9, to slide on said element 22, following its shape, which conveys the bead into the channel of the wheel rim.

[0032] During this operation, the free roller 23 which faces outwards is moved into forced contact with the lower portion of the tire by acting on the lever 27. By pushing on the lever, the sleeve 24 in fact slides on the

bar 25 and moves the roller so as to maintain the contact in order to push the bead inside the edge of the wheel rim even from a position which is diametrically opposite with respect to the position of the element 22.

[0033] When the tire has been mounted, it is inflated to a pressure which is substantially equal to the normal operating pressure and the platform 31 is lifted in order to bring the rollers 34 into contact with the tread.

[0034] The wheel is turned again and the pressure applied by the rollers of the cradle 33 causes the final settling of the beads of the tire 2 on the sidewalls of the wheel rims.

[0035] The procedure is substantially similar for special tires 2.

[0036] However, the free roller 18 is fitted at the lowest end of the rod 12.

[0037] When the wheel is fitted on the clamping means or elements 9, in order to break the bead of the tire 2, which is appropriately deflated (Figure 6), the roller 18 is moved into a position horizontally aligned with the beads by sliding the rod 12 in the sleeve 13.

[0038] Once this position has been reached, by making the carriage 6 slide on the cross-member 4 towards the frame 3, in practice from the outside towards the inside of the station 1, and by simultaneously rotating the means 9, the first bead is pushed towards the internal channel of the wheel rim, in a position in which it is slightly loose.

[0039] The operator then grips a lever, which can be supplied separately or be a permanent part of the standard equipment and is arranged on said rod 12, and lifts the previously removed bead beyond the edge of the wheel rim.

[0040] By then moving the roller 18 onto the opposite side of the tire 2 with respect to the preceding side, the carriage 6 is slid outwards and the means 9 are turned; the roller 18 fully extracts the upper portion of the tire 2 from the wheel rim together with the ring that composes the special tire.

[0041] The lower portion of said tire is extracted by acting on the lever 27, pulling it outwards; this forces the innermost roller 23 into contact with the bead and, by maintaining the traction on the lever 27, both the tire 2 and the internal ring 2b made of elastomeric material are fully extracted.

[0042] For the reverse operation of fitting (Figures 13, 14 and 15), first the internal ring 2b is arranged on the wheel rim and then the wheel rim is inserted in the tire 2 through the larger diameter.

[0043] The assembly is then placed and fixed on the means 9 of the station 1 and the roller 18 is placed in contact with the bead that faces outwards, i.e. the bead that has the smaller diameter; simultaneously, by acting on the lever 27 and pushing it towards the inside of the station 1, the roller 23 also is moved into contact with the lower portion of the bead.

[0044] Then the means 9 are turned and transverse

thrust is activated simultaneously with the carriage 6 and with the lever 27: the bead thus actuated gradually moves beyond the edge of the wheel rim and arranges itself inside it.

[0045] The same transverse thrusting maneuver is then repeated for the opposite bead and the tire is thus mounted on its wheel rim.

[0046] For special tires 2, also, there is a step for seating after inflation; as done for conventional tires, the platform 31 is raised until the rollers 34 of the cradle 31 make contact with the tread; then the means 9 are turned and the pressure applied by the rollers seats the beads against the edges of the wheel rim.

[0047] The above-described mounting and removal operations can be performed also by using the auxiliary arm 36 (Figures 20, 21, 22, 23) provided with the guiding tool 37; in order to do this, after mounting and fixing a wheel on the means 9, the auxiliary arm 36 is moved from the inactive position to the active position, mutually aligning the head 40 and the receptacle 39; the former is inserted in the latter and is locked in position by lowering the guillotine 41.

[0048] The tool 37 is fitted, as in the other cases, on a rod 42 of its own which can slide in a sleeve 43 which is in turn fitted on a further rod 44 which is slidingly fitted in a sleeve 45; all these elements allow to move the tool 37 into the active position, inserted between the edge of the wheel rim and the bead, so that the bead, both in the case of a conventional tire and in the case of a special tire, actuated in advance by the plate 16, can, according to the situation, be guided out of the edge of the wheel rim or, on the contrary, be guided towards the interior of the edge.

[0049] In practice it has been observed that the above-described invention achieves the intended aim and object.

[0050] The invention thus conceived is susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the same inventive concept.

[0051] All the details may further be replaced with other technically equivalent ones.

[0052] In practice, the materials employed, as well as the shapes and the dimensions, may be any according to requirements without thereby abandoning the scope of the protection of the appended claims.

[0053] The disclosures in Italian Patent Application No. MO99A000098 from which this application claims priority are incorporated herein by reference.

[0054] Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly, such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A multipurpose station for mounting and removing conventional and special tires, characterized in that it is constituted by a turret-type frame (3) from the top vertex of which a horizontal guiding cross-member (4) cantilevers out, a carriage (6) for supporting first (7) and second (8) means for mounting and removing tires (2) from their respective wheel rims (2a) being able to move back and forth on said cross-member (4), under the actuation of a corresponding actuator (5), said frame (3) having, at a substantially median vertical elevation, conventional elements (9) for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels and having, in a downward region, pusher means (10) which co-operate with said first and second mounting and removal means (7, 8) and lifting means (11) for lifting the wheels towards said conventional supporting and clamping elements (9) and for seating the mounted tires.
2. The multipurpose station according to claim 1, characterized in that said first fitting and removal means (7) are constituted by a substantially vertical rod (12) which is fitted so that it can slide in a corresponding sleeve (13) which is rigidly coupled to said supporting carriage (6) and is actuated by way of its own fluid-driven actuator (14), two tools (15-18) correspondingly usable on conventional or special tires being alternately applicable to the lower end of said rod (12).
3. The multipurpose station according to claim 2, characterized in that said tool for conventional tires is constituted by a shaped support (15) which is articulated so as to rotate at the lower end of said rod (12) and on which a freely rotating plate (16) and an opposite-facing extractor claw (17) are fitted.
4. The multipurpose station according to claim 2, characterized in that said tool for special tires is constituted by at least one roller (18) which is mounted so that it can rotate freely at the lower end of said rod (12) and is coaxial thereto, for contact with the sidewall/bead region of the tires (2).
5. The multipurpose station according to claims 2, 3 and 4, characterized in that said rod (12) and said sleeve (13) have cross-sections which have a polygonal perimeter and mutually interpenetrate in order to provide engagement with a single degree of freedom.
6. The multipurpose station according to claims 1 and 2, characterized in that said second mounting and removal means (8) are constituted by an arm (19) which is supported by said rod (12) proximate to its

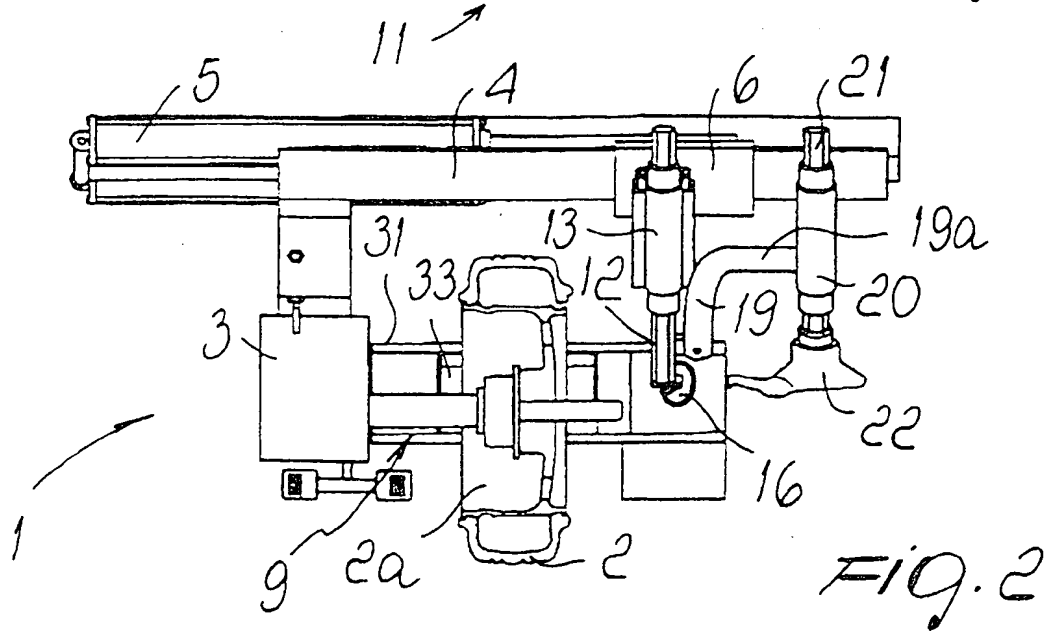
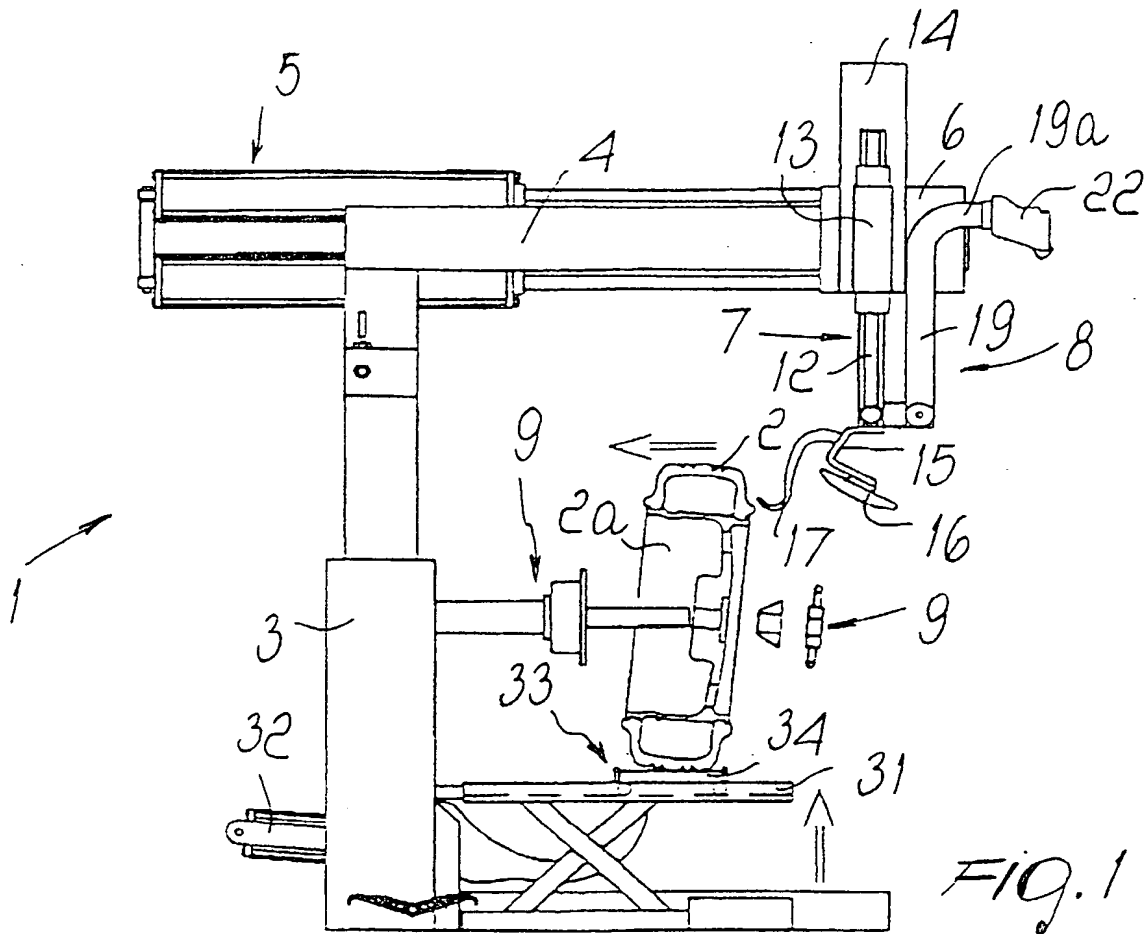
lower end and is articulated so that it rotates between an upward-facing inactive position and a downward-facing active position, said arm (19) forming a curved portion which, in said active configuration, is orientated towards said rotating support elements (9) and has, at its tip, a sleeve (20) in which a second rod (21) is slidingly fitted, a shaped element (22) for guiding the beads (2a) of the tires (2) during mounting and removal being rigidly fitted at the lower end of said second rod (21).

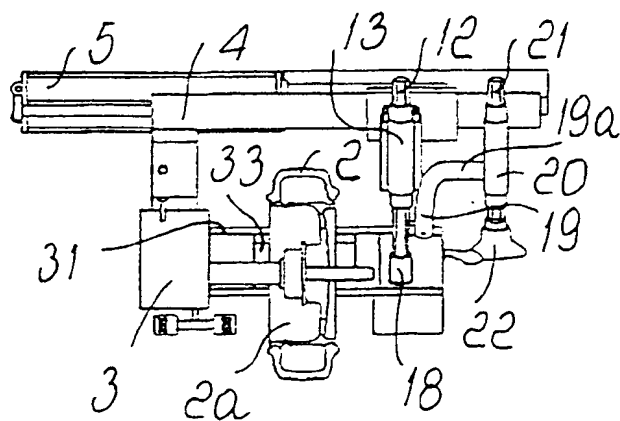
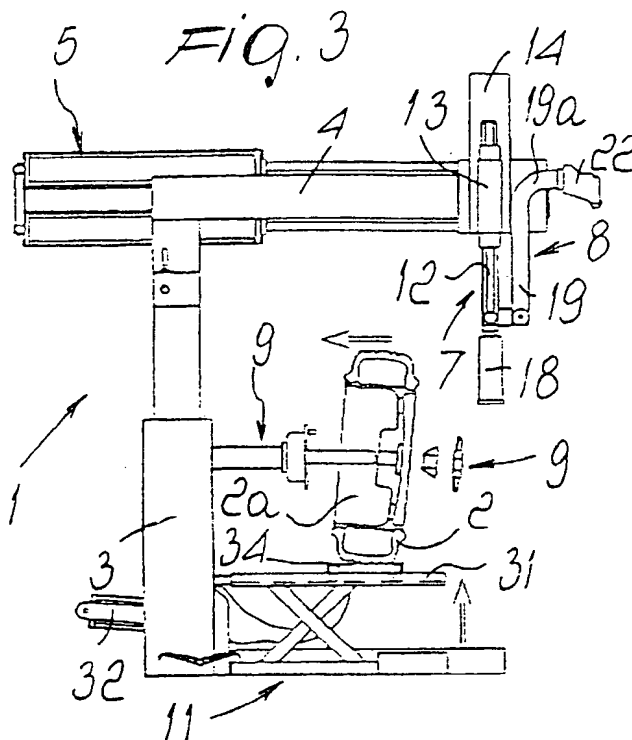
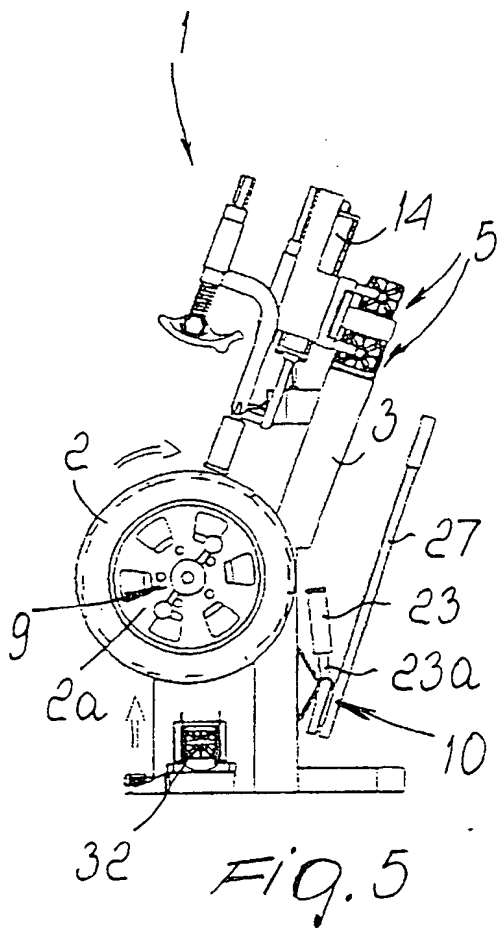
7. The multipurpose station according to claim 1, characterized in that said pusher means (10) are constituted by two free rollers (23) which are fitted in a parallel configuration on corresponding stems (23a), each of which protrudes at right angles from a corresponding sleeve (24) which is in turn slidingly engaged on a horizontal guiding bar (25) which is parallel to said guiding cross-member (4) and also protrudes from said turret-type frame (3) below said elements (9) for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels, said sleeves (24) being rotationally connected to each other by means of said guiding bar (25), means (26) for adjusting the mutual spacing of said sleeves (24) being also provided.
8. The multipurpose station according to claim 7, characterized in that said guiding bar (25) has, at its free end, an articulated handle (27) for simultaneously turning said sleeves (24) and said guiding bar (25) and moving at least one of said sleeves (24) in a horizontal direction.
9. The multipurpose station according to claim 7, characterized in that said guiding bar (25) has, at its free end, a fluid-driven actuator for simultaneously rotating said sleeves (24) and said guiding bar (25) and moving at least one of said sleeves (24) in a horizontal direction.
10. The multipurpose station according to claims 4, 8 and 9, characterized in that probes for sensing the width of the tires (2) are associated with said sleeves (24) and/or said free rollers (18).
11. The multipurpose station according to claims 7 and 8, characterized in that said means (26) for adjusting the mutual spacing of said sleeves (24) are constituted by a plate (28) which is rigidly fitted to the handle (27) and protrudes in a parallel arrangement with respect to said guiding bar (25), said plate (28) being provided with a succession of aligned through sectors (29) for alternative engagement with a corresponding pin which protrudes from at least one of said sleeves (24).

12. The multipurpose station according to claim 1,

characterized in that said lifting means (11) are constituted by a horizontal platform (31) which is arranged below said conventional elements (9) for supporting and clamping the wheels, is vertically aligned with them and can be actuated so as to move vertically parallel to itself by way of a corresponding independent actuation unit (32), a cradle (33) being provided on the upper face of said platform (31), the position of said cradle (33) being horizontally slidingly adjustable, said cradle (33) being meant to support and retain the tires and to apply seating pressure thereto.

13. The multipurpose station according to claim 12, characterized in that said cradle (33) has, at its ends, respective transverse and parallel rollers (34) which are supported freely between the sides of the cradle, in order to provide dynamic contact with the tires (2).
14. The multipurpose station according to the preceding claims, characterized in that said turret-type frame (3) can optionally be equipped with a lateral post (35) which is joined, at its upper and lower ends, respectively to the corresponding end of said guiding cross-member (4) and to the base of said turret-type frame (3), an auxiliary arm (36) being articulated to said post (35) so as to rotate along a horizontal path, said auxiliary arm (36) being provided, at its distal end relative to the post (35), with a tool (37) for guiding the beads of the tires (2) and with an element (38) for centering said guiding tool (37) in the active configuration.
15. The multipurpose station according to claim 14, characterized in that said centering element (38) is constituted by a shaped receptacle (39) which is formed at the tip of the distal end of said auxiliary arm (36) for the snug coaxial insertion of a complementarily shaped head (40) which protrudes centrally from the conventional rotating shaft that composes said conventional elements (9) for rotatably supporting and clamping the wheels, means (41) being provided for retaining the head (40) in the receptacle (39) in the active configuration of said guiding tool (37).
16. The multipurpose station according to claim 15, characterized in that said means for retaining the head in the receptacle are constituted by a transverse guillotine (41) which can be inserted through a corresponding through slot (42) formed at the end of said auxiliary arm (36) in a corresponding aligned groove (43) which is formed perimetrically in said head (40).





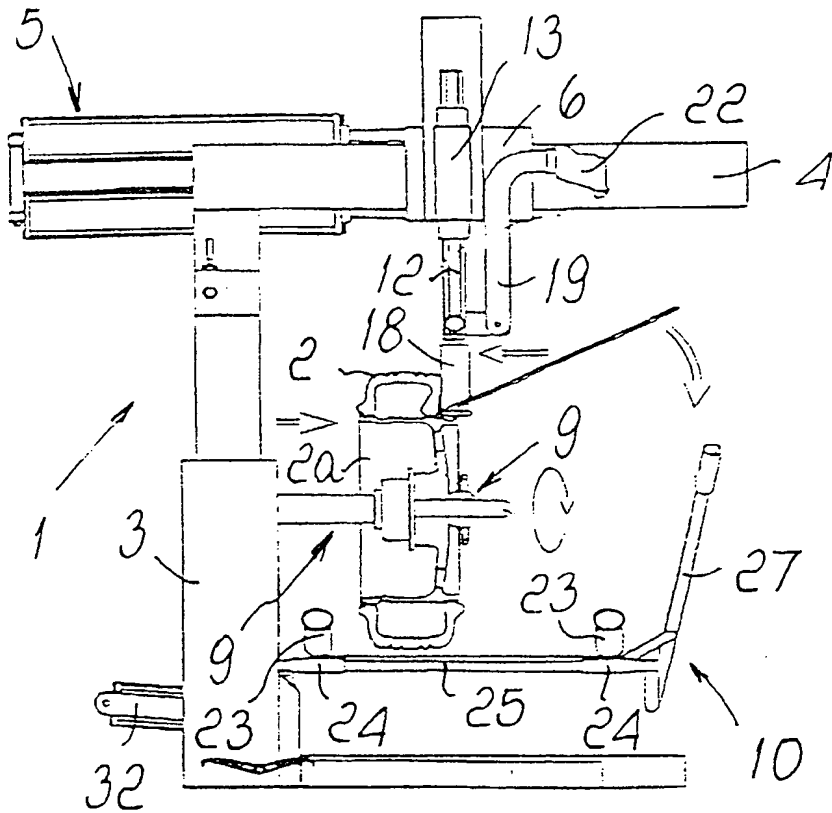


FIG. 6

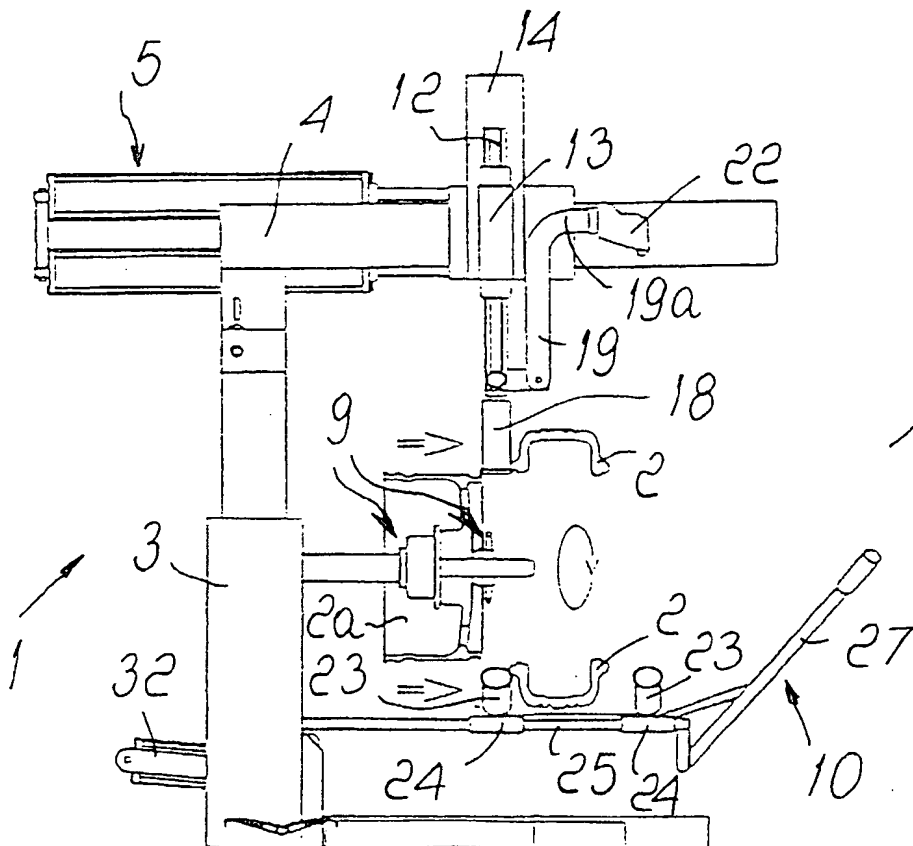


FIG. 7

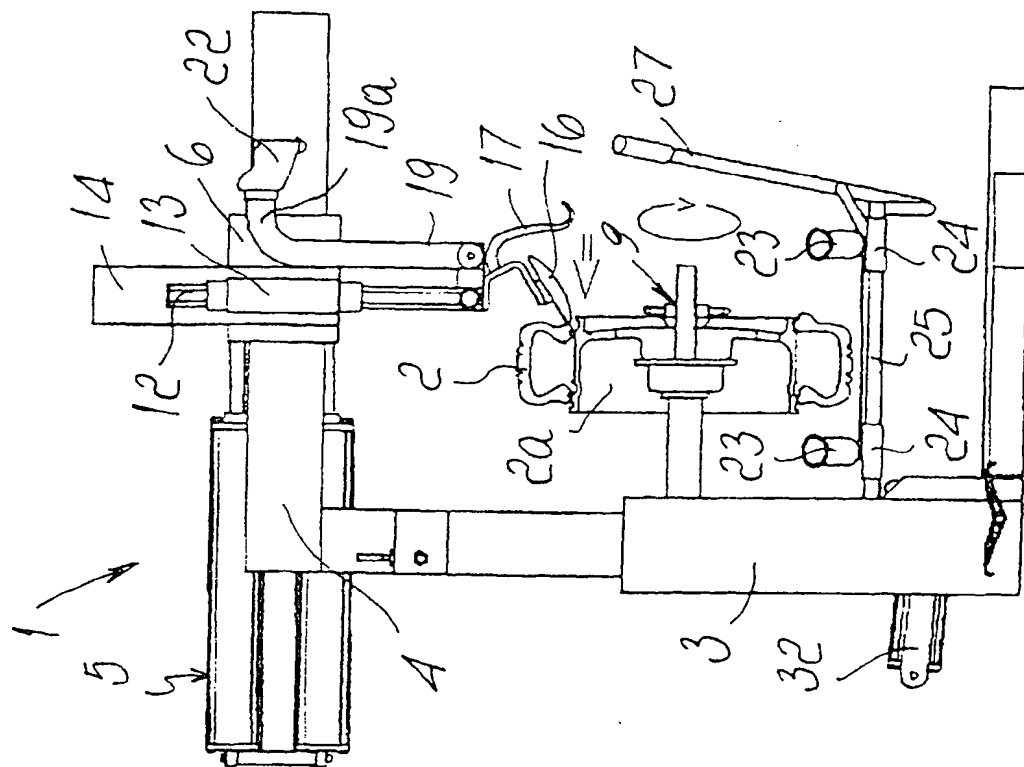


Fig. 9

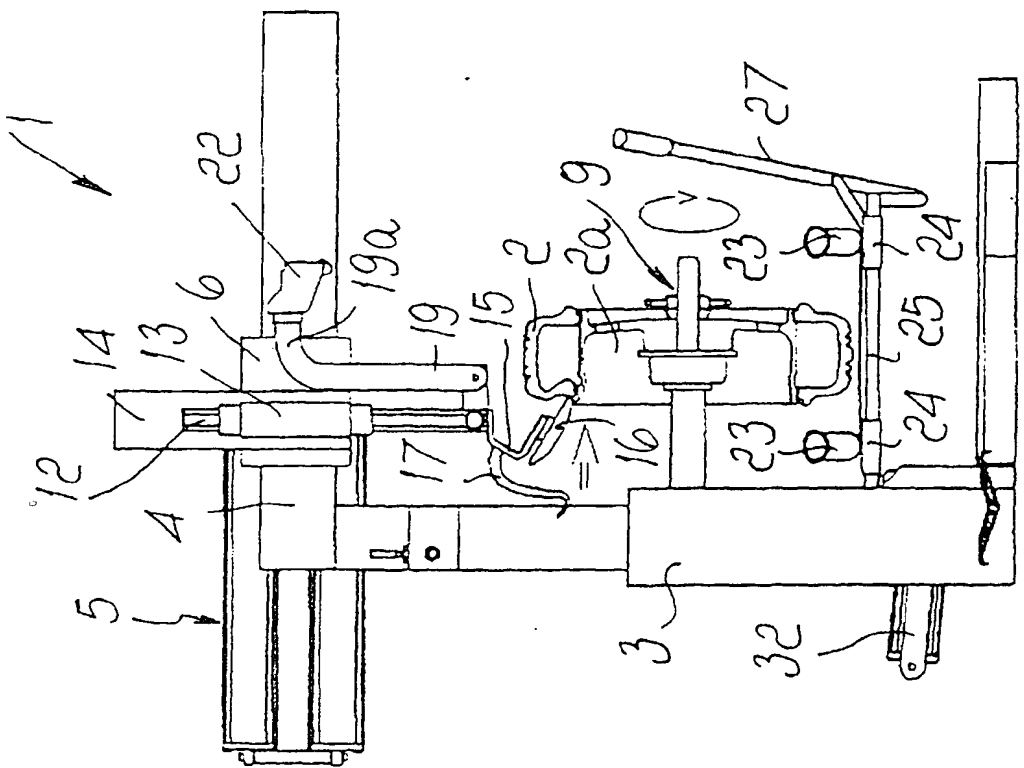


Fig. 8

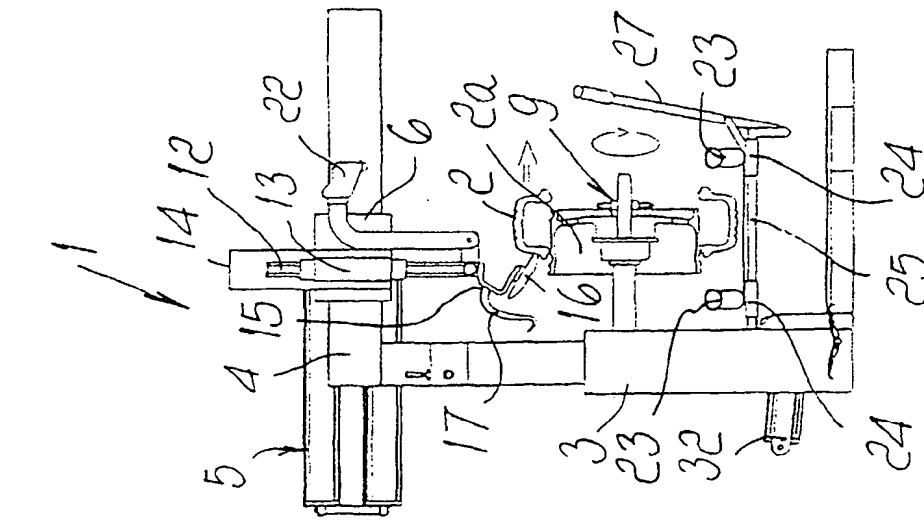


FIG. 10

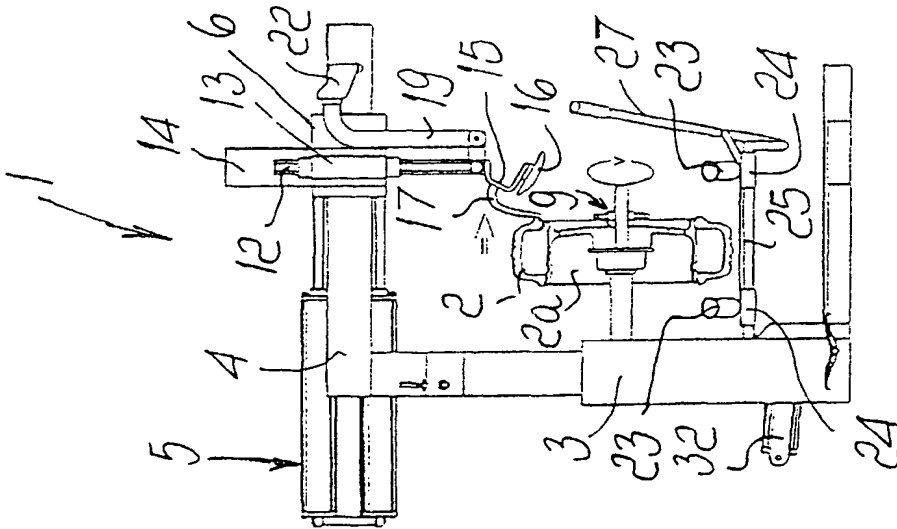


FIG. 11

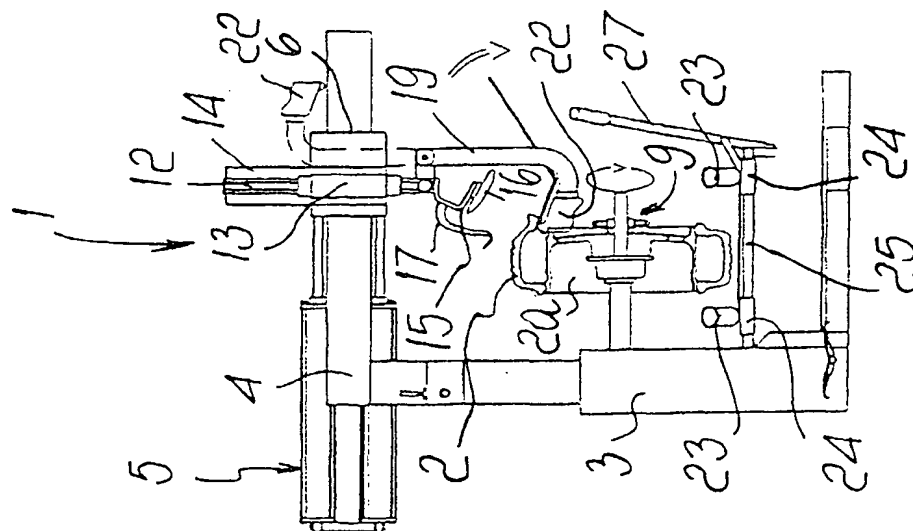


FIG. 12

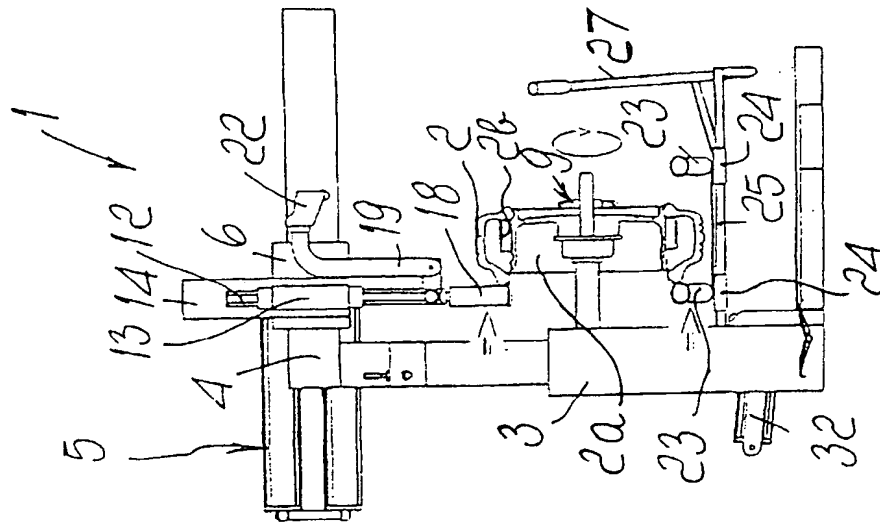


FIG. 13

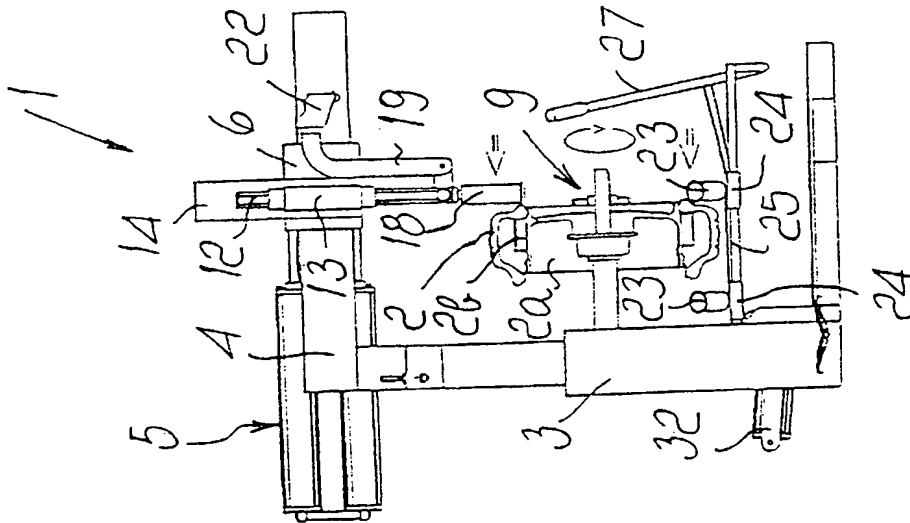


FIG. 14

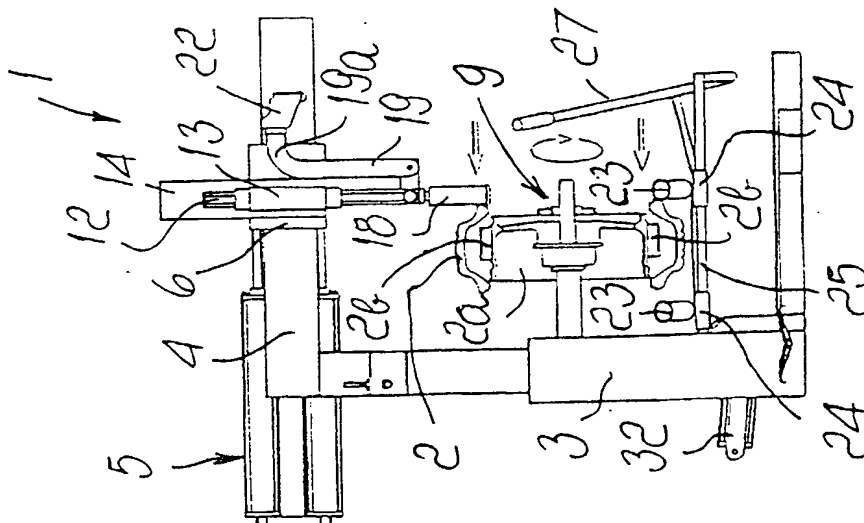


FIG. 15

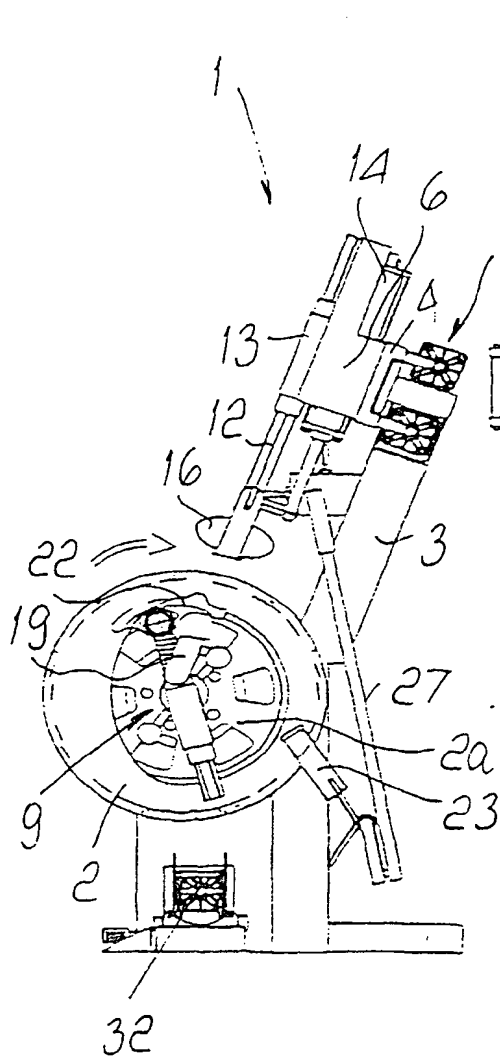


FIG. 17

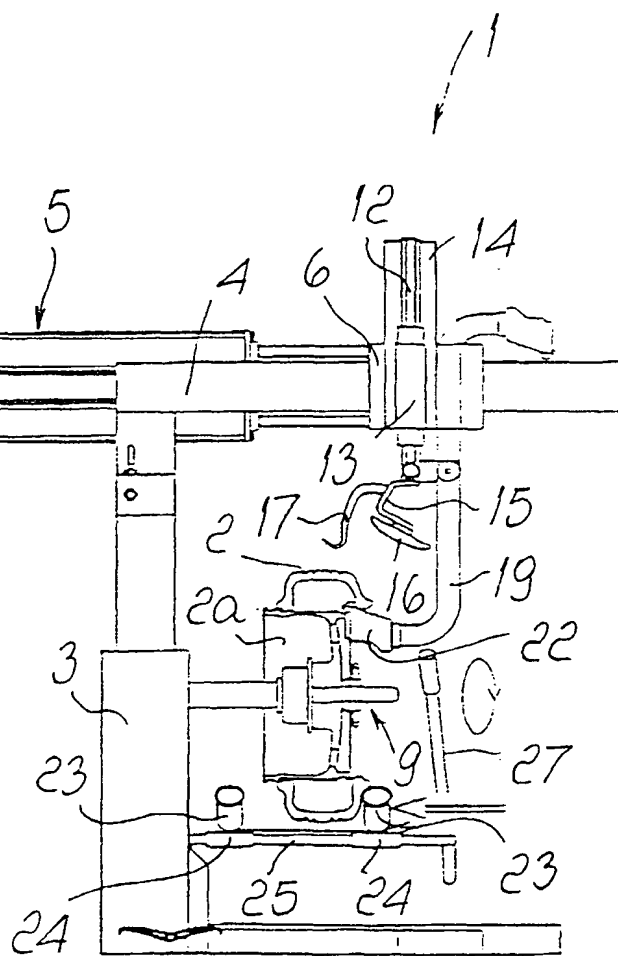
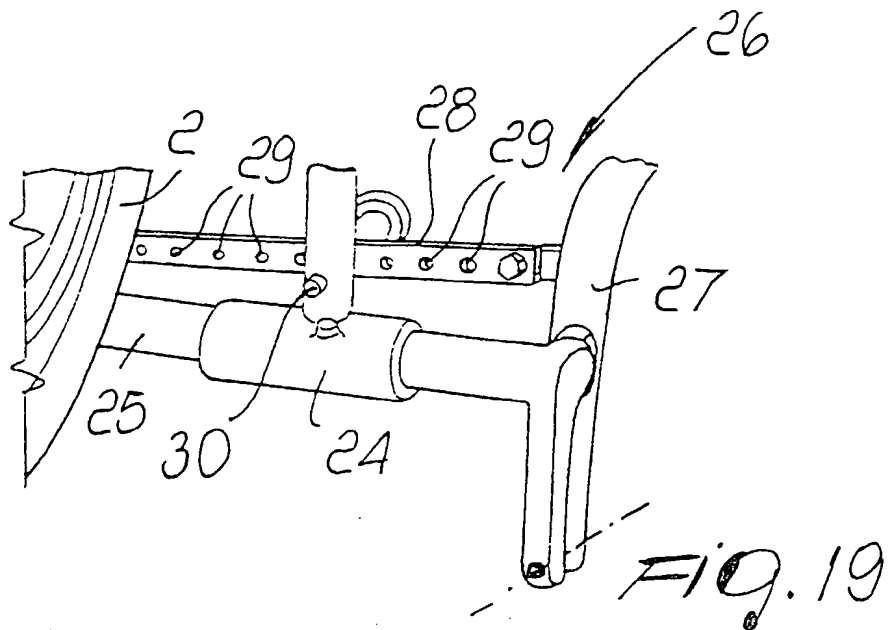
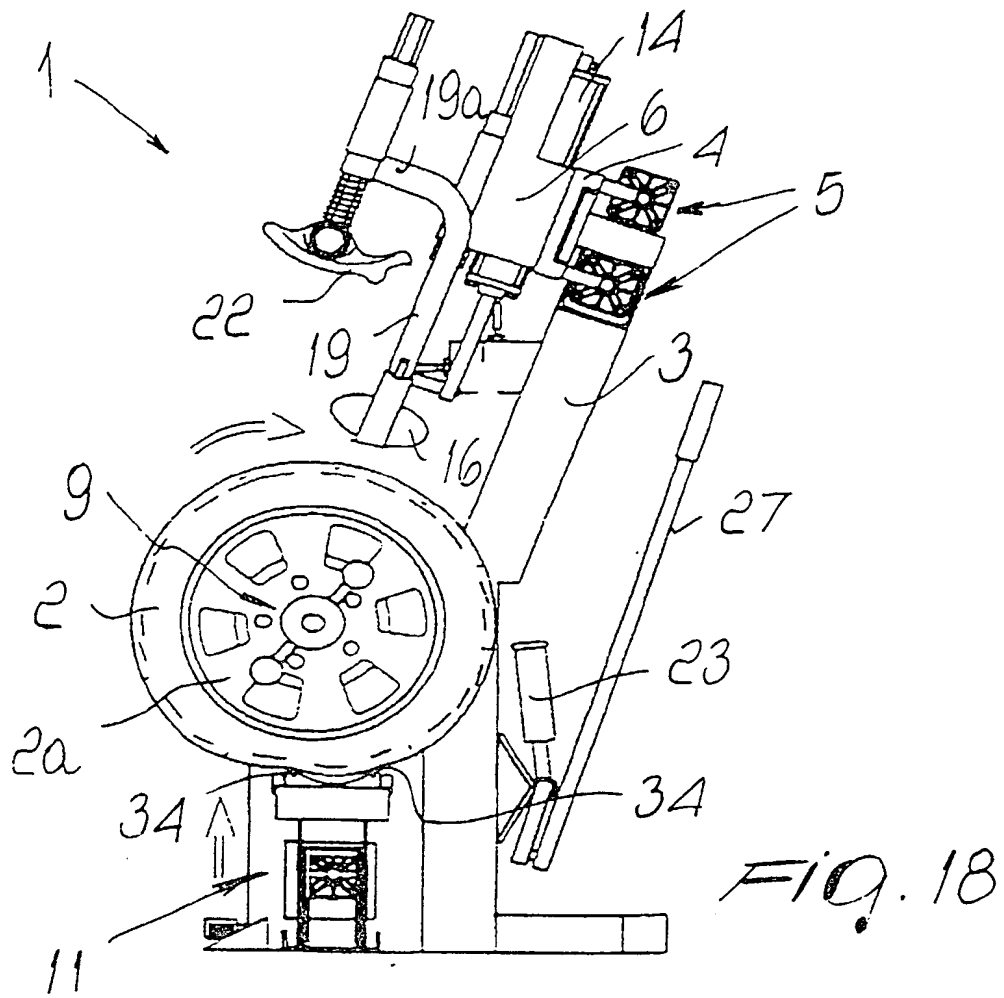
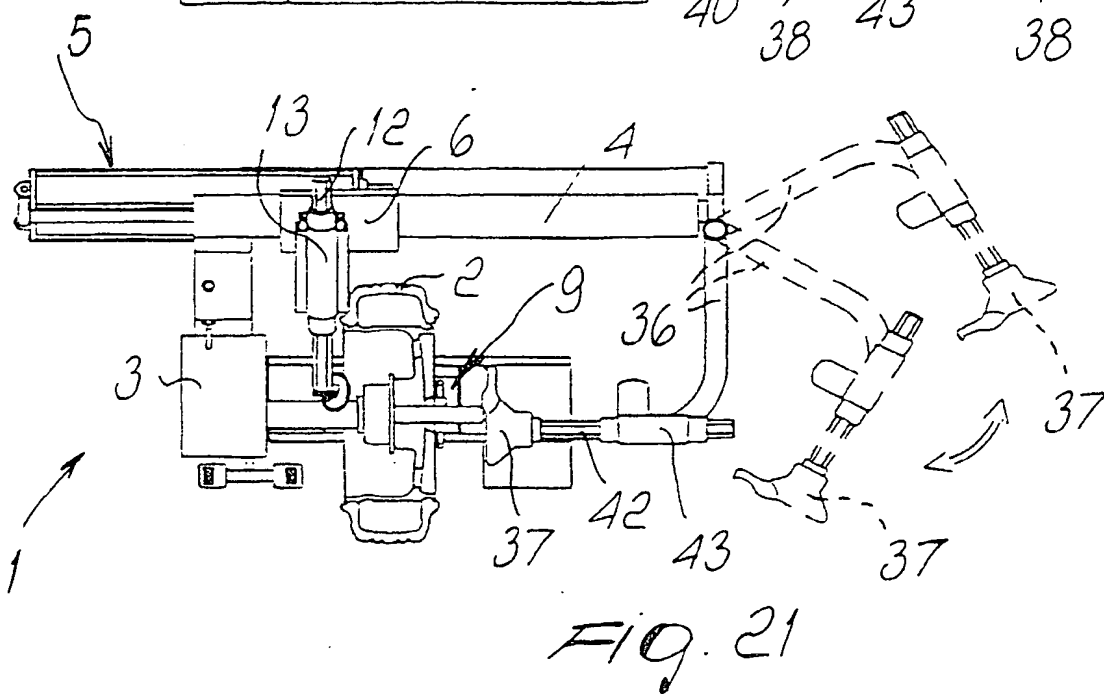
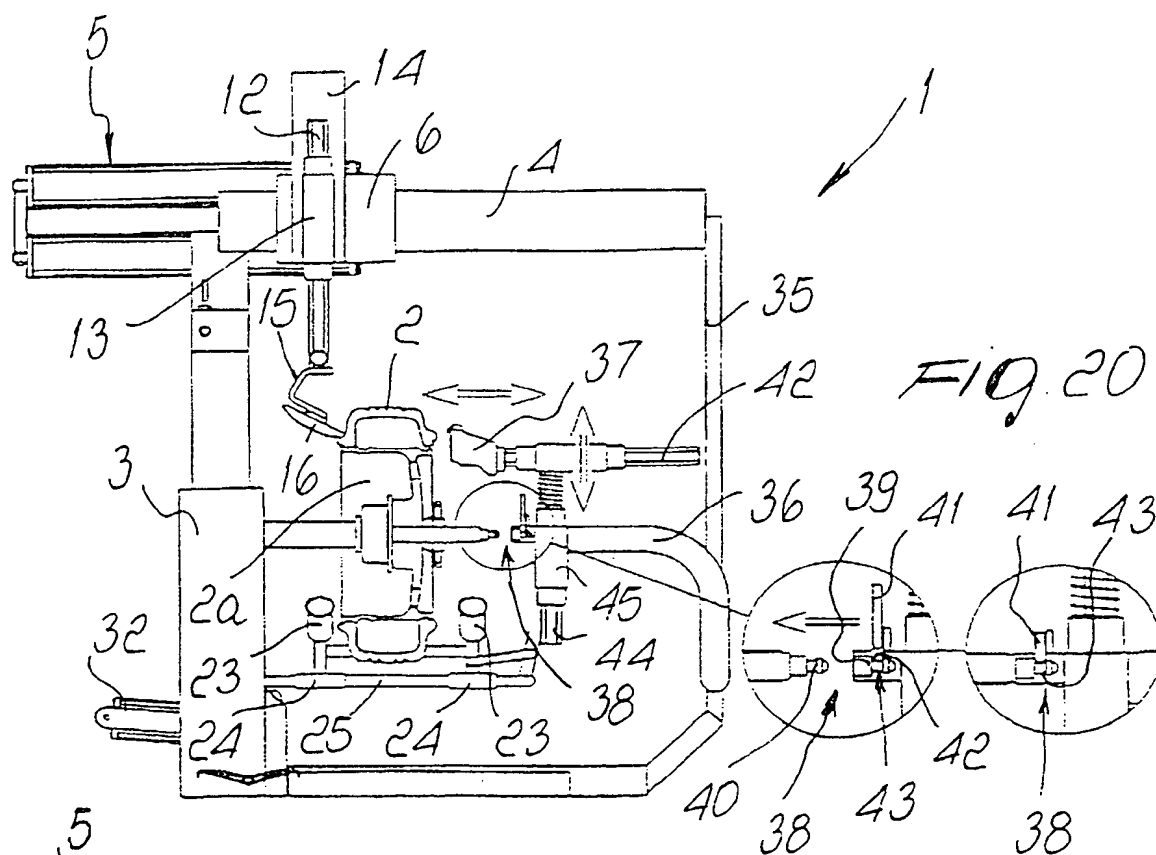


FIG. 16





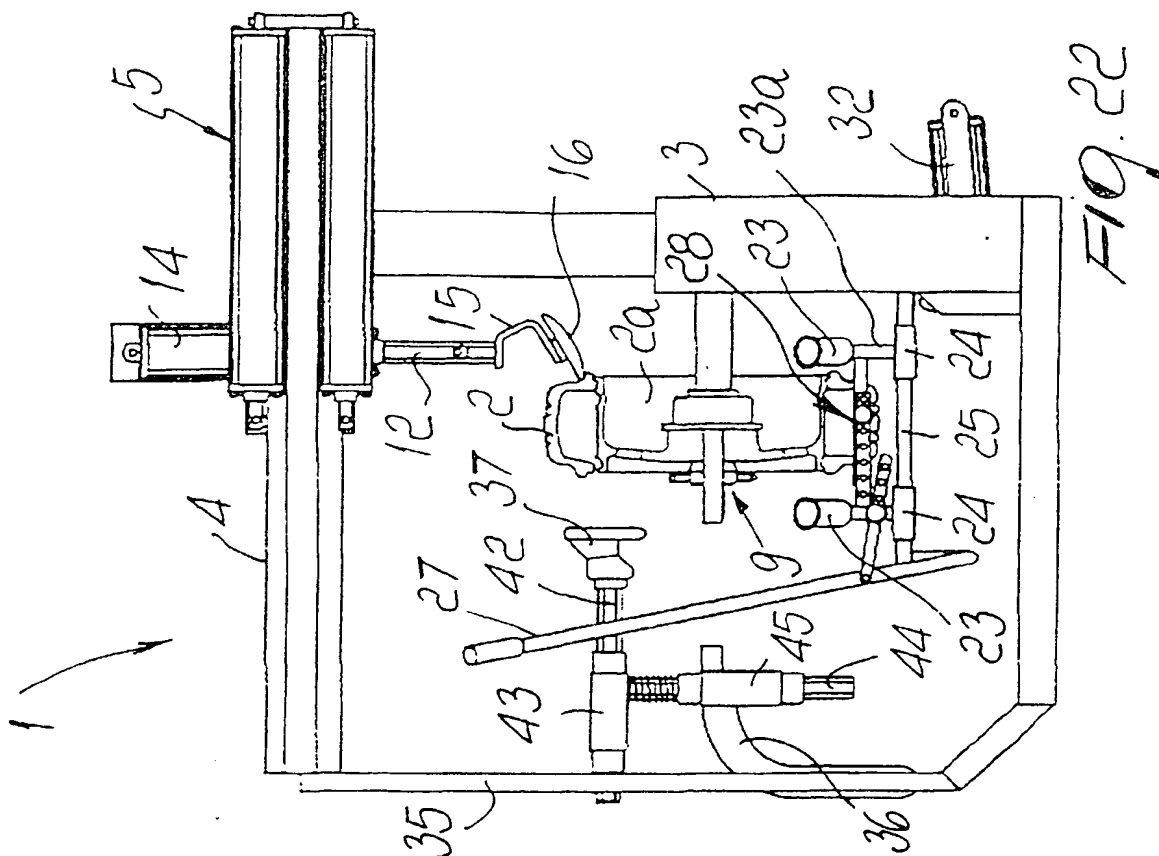


FIG. 22

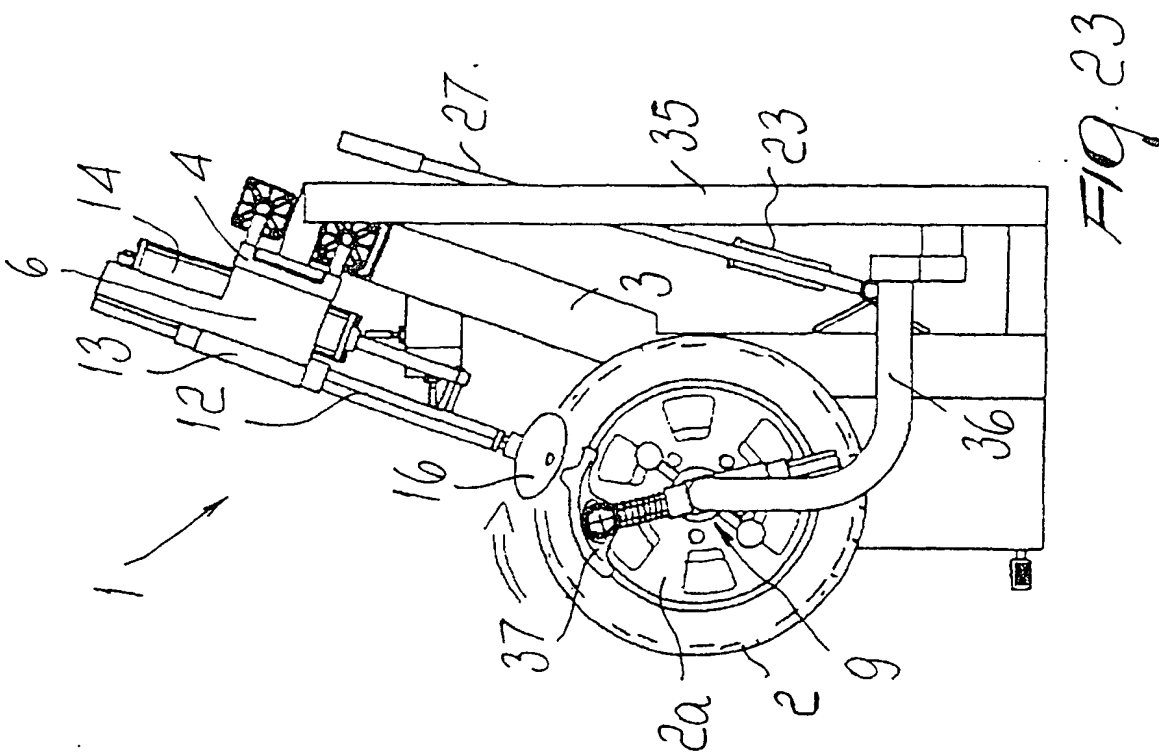


FIG. 23



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 11 0134

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Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 18 August 2000	Examiner Smeyers, H
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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